Thorough FBI probe found no

Newly released files show exhaustive research. All, including a Ruby

By John Diamond
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WASHINGTON — The FBI questioned nearly 1,000 people in the weeks following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy but found no link between Lee Harvey Oswald and the man who silenced him, Jack Ruby.

FBI documents released yesterday by the National Archives indicate that the possibility of a conspiracy, in which Ruby was sent to kill the accused assassin, was exhaustively explored. The Archives released 28 boxes of FBI documents as part of the government's effort to open the books on the Kennedy assassination.

The documents include a 1923 evaluation of Jacob Rubenstein — as Ruby was known in his youth — describing him as "disobedient and quick-tempered"; Ruby's polygraph chart, indicating he was probably telling the truth when he denied a conspiracy, and extensive photographs of the strip-tease acts at Ruby's Dallas nightclub.

More than any other single event, the shooting of Oswald by Ruby in the basement of the Dallas jail at 11:20 a.m. on Nov. 24, 1963, two days after the Kennedy assassination, triggered public suspicion of a conspiracy — suspicion that survives to this day.

Much of the material made available to reporters, researchers and assassination buffs has already been open to the public through the FBI reading room. But portions of some documents previously blacked out or omitted from the public record were included in the archives release.

The FBI reached back to a 1923 report by a Jewish youth service agency in Chicago, where Ruby grew up, describing his truancy from school, disobedience and quick temper. Ruby himself later linked his quick temper to his decision to shoot Oswald two days after Oswald allegedly assassinated Kennedy.

After the Oswald slaying, which was captured live on national television, the FBI put together 150 pages of notes on interviews with the Dallas police officers who witnessed the shooting. Detective T.D. McMillon said he heard Ruby say, as he charged toward Oswald, pistol in hand, "You rat son of a bitch,

Oswald-Ruby link

lie detector test, point away from a conspiracy.

you shot the President." Others quoted Ruby as saying, "I hope I killed" Oswald.

The FBI record is filled with leads linking Ruby to Oswald checked by bureau agents. Indeed, the phones started ringing at FBI offices almost immediately after the Oswald shooting with people claiming knowledge of a plot.

The patent absurdity of some leads did not deter the FBI from investigating. A Roseville, Ohio, woman, for example, reported to the FBI two weeks after the assassination that during the singing of "Cowboy's Lament" on the Jimmy Dean TV show, she heard a "message of instructions to Jack Ruby." The FBI's Cincinnati bureau tersely concluded that the woman "contributed nothing of value."

The FBI tried to learn whether Ruby had any ties to organized crime. But most of the documents indicate that the bureau concluded that Ruby was a small-time operator who was "never able to cultivate" the friendship of important people in organized crime or law enforcement.

Ruby called his shooting of Oswald a "compulsive act," and a "moment of insanity." A polygraph test administered by the FBI for the Warren Commission in July 1964 indicated that Ruby was telling the truth.

But the FBI, noting Ruby's unstable mind, cautioned that the results must be viewed as "inconclusive."

Ruby was convicted of acting alone in shooting Oswald. He died of cancer in January 1967 while still in custody.

Jack Ruby was quick-tempered as a youth, FBI files said.